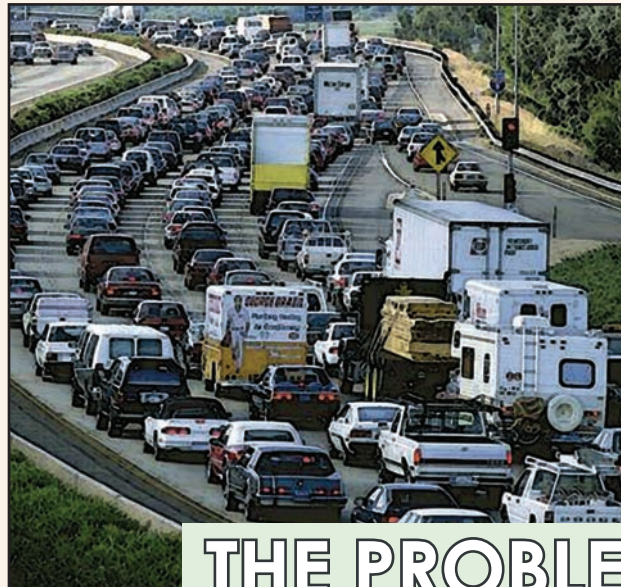


Massachusetts Smart Growth Toolkit

The Costs of Sprawl

Sprawl is costly on many levels. Sprawling development requires significant and costly infrastructure investments to provide services such as roads, sewer, and water. When housing is located away from jobs and commercial centers, driving is often the only transportation option. The amount of time people spend in their cars every year is significant and climbing.

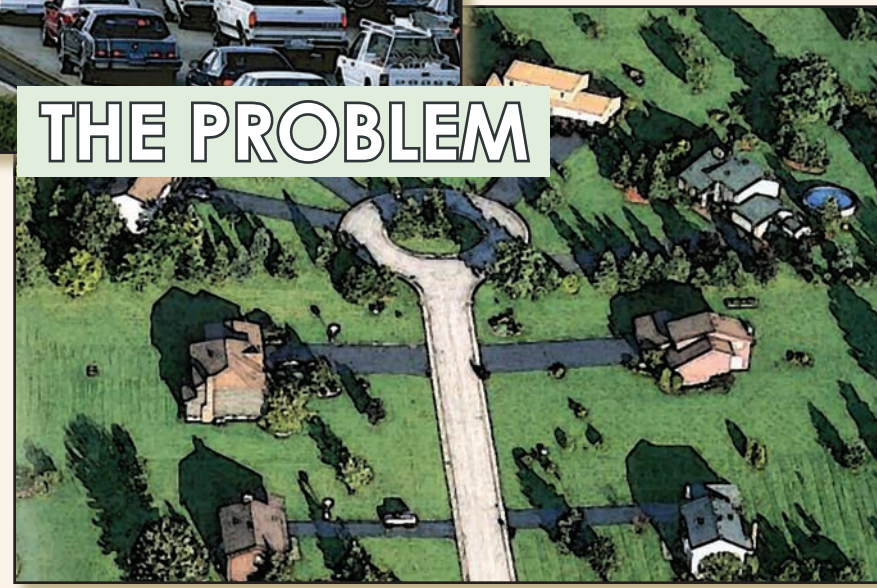
Housing diversity is another casualty of sprawl. Single-family homes are often the only housing option. This one-size fits all approach leaves many without appropriate or affordable housing options. A single person may desire to rent an apartment or an "empty-nester" couple may prefer a condo but these options don't exist in every community. Sprawl also comes with a heavy environmental cost. Lot clearance for new development contributes to habitat fragmentation, increased storm water runoff, and loss of biodiversity. Air and water quality are also threatened by increased vehicle trips, increased stormwater runoff, and new demand for water. Recent research has demonstrated that less dense neighborhoods have human health consequences as well.



SPRAWL

American families are spending more than one of every five dollars on transportation.

THE PROBLEM

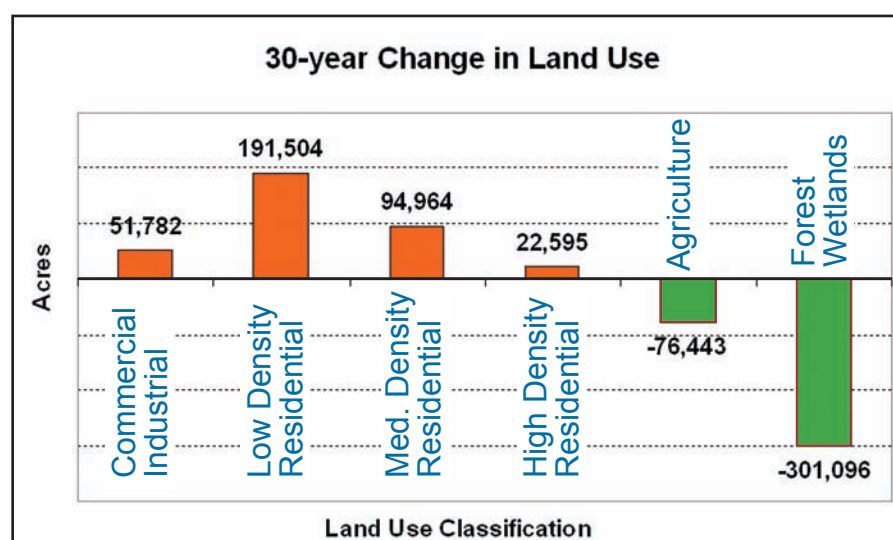


■ Forty-four acres of land is consumed by development in Massachusetts every day. Almost 9 out of every 10 acres consumed go to residential development, with 65% of that used for low-density, large-lot development. (Mass. Audubon Society, "Losing Ground", 2003)

■ When housing is located away from jobs and commercial centers, driving is often the only transportation option. According to the American Automobile Association the average cost of owning and operating a new car is now \$8,410 a year. For the young, old, and families without cars, this reliance on one form of transportation can become a huge burden.

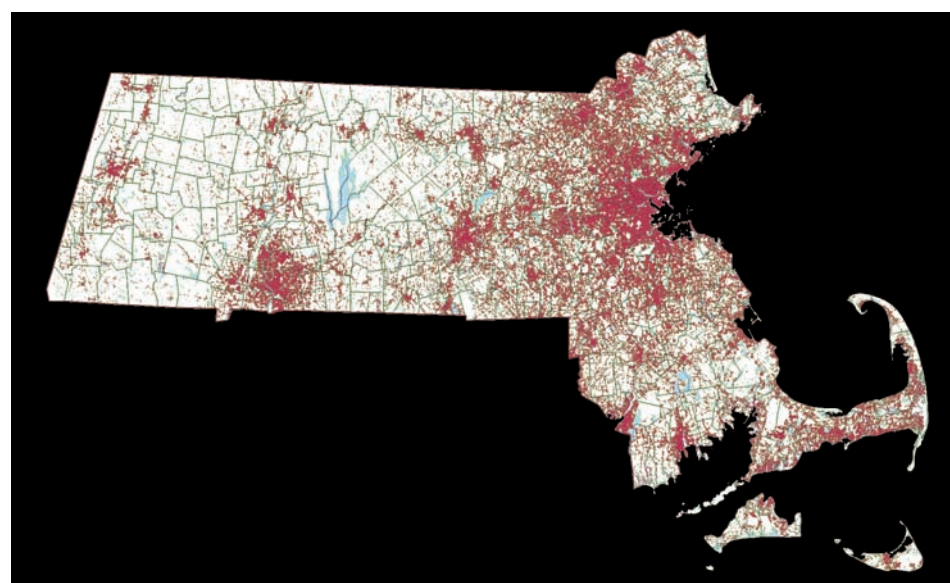
■ The consensus shows that the average number of people per household has decreased significantly over the last 30 years (from 3.1 in 1970 to 2.6 in 2002). Yet, new homes continue to be built, suggesting that there is increased capacity in the existing housing stock. This has occurred while the value of homes and the resulting tax burden continues to rise. Homeowners are often forced to sell a house that is too big for their needs, especially for fixed income residents.

■ As costs rise, American families are spending one of every five dollars on transportation, more than on food and health care combined (Smart Growth America).



LAND USE

This map shows developed land across the Commonwealth in red, and undeveloped land in white, some of which is protected. As the chart illustrates, farms and forests are being converted, primarily for low-density residential development.



Introduction to Smart Growth

Smart growth is a principle of land development that emphasizes mixing land uses, increases the availability of a range of housing types in neighborhoods, takes advantage of compact design, and fosters distinctive and attractive communities. It preserves open space, farmland, natural beauty and critical environmental areas, strengthens existing communities, provides a variety of transportation choices, makes development decisions predictable, fair and cost effective and encourages community and stakeholder collaboration in development decisions.

Smart growth is not "no-growth", growth is needed to keep Massachusetts economically and culturally vibrant. Currently about 1/4 of the Commonwealth is developed and 1/4 is permanently protected. The 50% of remaining land is at stake. Some of this land will be needed to accommodate new housing and businesses. However, we are consuming far more land than necessary to accommodate our growth needs. The smart growth techniques included in the Smart Growth Toolkit will provide communities the ability to work with the Commonwealth to use the remaining land as efficiently as possible, while building vibrant and sustainable neighborhoods and communities.

Smart Growth in Massachusetts

Attractive village and town centers, vibrant urban neighborhoods, historic mill buildings, and fields, forests, and streams characterize many parts of Massachusetts. These resources help define the character of our towns and cities. Revitalizing and reinforcing these areas is a key smart growth strategy. The character and high quality of life of our towns and cities is a competitive advantage that differentiates us from many other areas of our country.

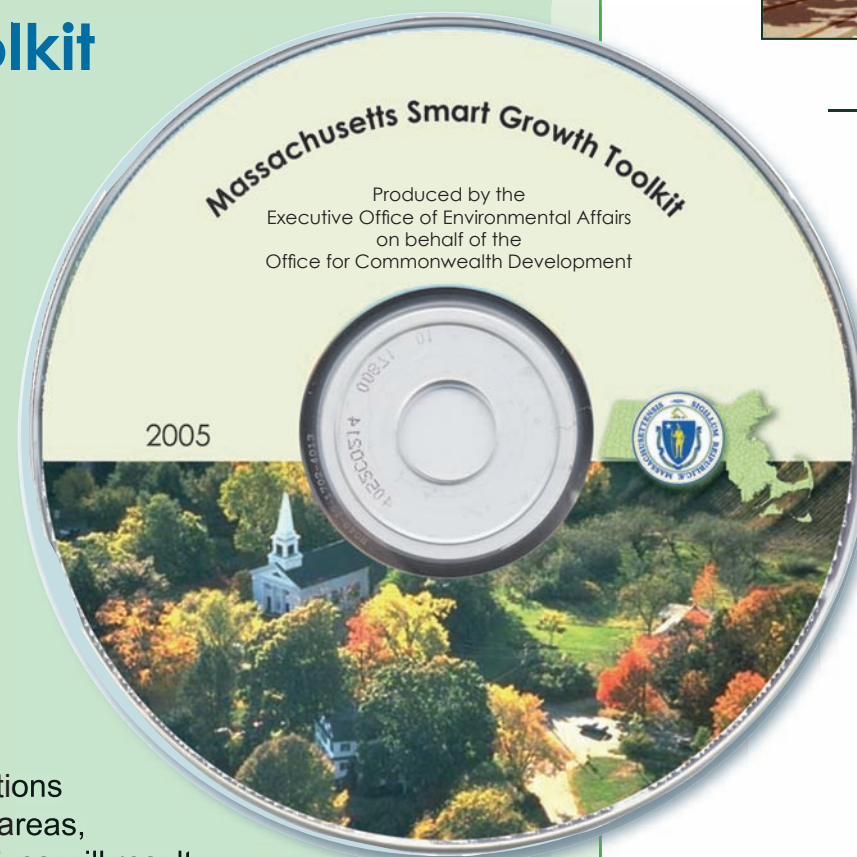
Smart Growth Toolkit

This Toolkit is a guide to implementation of smart growth techniques that decision makers can use to turn the Commonwealth's Sustainable Development Principles into reality. By applying these Principles, towns, planners, and developers can evaluate proposals for smart growth consistency.

A critical component of smart growth is identifying the areas that are appropriate for development and those that should be protected and preserved. Good candidates for development include: downtowns; village centers; areas adjacent to these centers; brownfields; and sites with access to transportation and other infrastructure.

Each region and community should participate in a comprehensive planning process to identify these locations within their towns. Following the identification of these areas, communities must ensure that zoning and other incentives will result in development consistent with these plans. Where and how a community chooses to implement smart growth should be explicitly reflected in the zoning and subdivision regulations that dictate future growth.

To obtain the Smart Growth Toolkit CD go to: www.mass.gov/ocd



Smart Growth Techniques

Transfer of Development Rights (TDR)



TDR is a regulatory strategy that harnesses private market forces to protect water supply, agricultural, habitat, recreational or other purposes, via the transfer of some or all of the development that would otherwise have occurred there to other less sensitive places.

In essence, development rights are "transferred" from one district (the "sending district") to another (the "receiving district"). Communities using TDR are shifting development densities within the community to achieve both open space and economic goals.

Transit Oriented Development (TOD)

TOD creates mixed-use, higher density communities that encourage people to live, work and shop near transit services and decrease their dependence on driving. Typically, it is characterized by:

- A mix of uses
- Moderate to high density
- Pedestrian orientation/connectivity
- Transportation choices
- Reduced parking
- High quality design



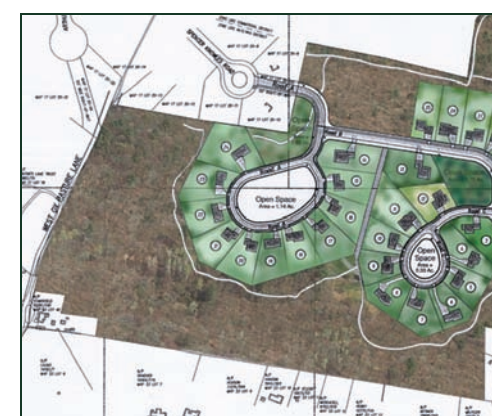
Traditional Neighborhood Design (TND)



TND, also known as "new urbanism", "neo-traditional" or village-style development, includes a variety of housing types, a mix of land uses, an active center, a walkable design, and often a transit option within a compact neighborhood scale area either as infill in an existing developed area or as a district scale project.

Open Space Residential Design (OSRD)

OSRD is an approach to residential development that promotes open space preservation based on environmental and social priorities. It features partnership in development design between municipal officials and developers that provides innovative flexible incentives for highest marketability, mixed housing types and land uses, and minimal disturbance to the natural terrain.



Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU)



An ADU is a self-contained apartment in an owner occupied single-family home/ lot that is either attached to the principal dwelling or in a separate structure on the same property. Accessory units (also known as accessory apartments, guest apartments, in-law apartments, family apartments or secondary units) provide supplementary housing that can be integrated into existing single family neighborhoods to provide a low priced housing alternative with little or no negative impact on the character of the neighborhood.

District Improvement Financing (DIF) Tax Increment Financing (TIF)

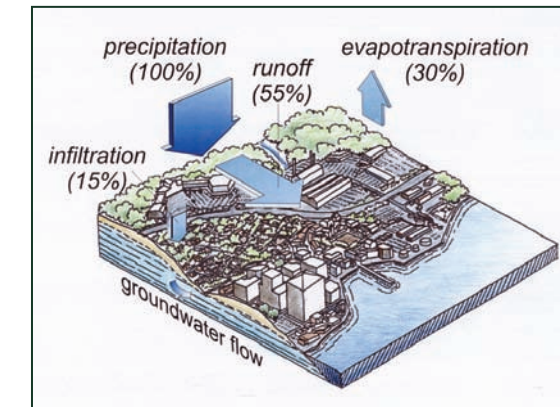
District Improvement Financing (DIF) and Tax Increment Financing (TIF) are economic tools that promote redevelopment by use of public/private partnerships. TIF offers tax breaks to developers, while DIF channels tax dollars into targeted redevelopment districts.



Smart growth is not "no-growth", growth is needed to keep Massachusetts economically and culturally vibrant.

Low Impact Development (LID)

Low Impact Development (LID) is a more sustainable land development pattern that results from a site planning process that first identifies critical natural resources, then determines appropriate building envelopes. LID also incorporates a range of best management practices (BMPs) that preserve the natural hydrology of the land.



Inclusionary Zoning (IZ)



Inclusionary zoning requires a portion of the housing units in certain real estate developments to be reserved as affordable to low- and moderate-income households. It is an effective tool that can be used by municipalities to ensure adequate affordable units are included in the normal course of real estate development.

Preserving Agricultural Land and Farming Opportunities

Preserving agricultural land and farming opportunities in Massachusetts has been a high priority of state and local officials for several decades. Through a variety of state and local initiatives, opportunities have emerged for agricultural preservation. Many communities have successfully preserved land and opportunities using a wide array of financial and legal tools.



Brownfields Reuse



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts is committed to the cleanup and redevelopment of brownfield properties as a way to stimulate the economy and promote environmental protection goals. Several incentives are available to developers including assistance with insurance and flexibility in remediation schedules.

Chapter 40R

In order to encourage housing production in the Commonwealth consistent with the concept of smart growth, the Legislature passed and the Governor signed into law Chapter 40R. Chapter 40R provides financial rewards to communities that adopt special zoning districts allowing as-of-right high density residential development.



Water Resources



Water is a finite resource that needs to be managed to meet current and future human needs as well as those of the environment. Our approaches to water management must ensure continued and sufficient quantity and quality of water for current and future human uses while maintaining ecological integrity.

The Commonwealth's Sustainable Development Principles

The state has worked hard to encourage planning and development that protects our natural resources, promotes social and economic health, and meets the needs of our residents. As a basic guide to local officials, developers, and citizens about what smart growth is, the Office for Commonwealth Development released the Sustainable Development Principles. The following Principles express the characteristics of smart growth development.

- **Redevelop First:** Revitalizing existing neighborhoods doesn't require expensive new infrastructure or consume forest and fields and finds new uses for historic buildings and underutilized brownfield sites.
- **Concentrate Development:** Compact development conserves land and fosters vibrant and walkable districts. According to the Lincoln Institute, more compact development could save the public sector in the Northeast \$40 billion over 25 years.
- **Be Fair:** The benefits and burdens of development should be equitably shared by all. Transparent and predictable permitting will result in cost-effective and fair outcomes.
- **Restore and Enhance the Environment:** The conservation, protection, and restoration of water, land, and cultural resources provides a high quality of life and ecological health.
- **Conserve Natural Resources:** Renewable energy and efficient use of building materials and water contribute to a healthier environment, limit waste, and are cost-effective.
- **Expand Housing Opportunities:** Expanding the number, affordability, and diversity of housing units will ensure that people of all abilities, income levels, and ages have appropriate housing options.
- **Provide Transportation Choice:** Opportunities for public transit, walking, and biking should be expanded.
- **Increase Job Opportunities:** Connecting people with jobs in their communities and close to homes and transportation infrastructure will expand our economy.
- **Foster Sustainable Businesses:** Great potential exists for new innovative industries and for resource-based industries to contribute to the social, economic, and environmental health of our state.
- **Plan Regionally:** Economic development, water, transportation, and housing are regional in nature; they don't stop at the town boundary. Regional planning recognizes this and results in inter-municipal coordination and better outcomes.



For more information on the Smart Growth Toolkit visit the website: www.mass.gov/ocd

